

ABSTRACT

Whitefish (*Coregonus sp.*) are widely distributed throughout the waters of the Koyukuk River drainage. Historically and today, whitefish constitute one of the more reliable and important subsistence resources for residents of the Koyukuk River area. Local fishers have accumulated knowledge pertaining to the efficient harvest and use of whitefish due to their long term residence in the area and reliance on these important fish. Exploitation of the whitefish resource requires knowing their patterns of seasonal movement, behavior, and habitat use. Western science is still in the early stages of documenting basic information on the distribution, life history, and critical habitats of whitefish throughout Alaska—a process that could benefit from an understanding of local and traditional knowledge (LTK). Based upon interviews with knowledgeable local residents in the communities of Allakaket and Hughes, this project involved the collection of LTK pertaining to whitefish in the upper Koyukuk River and the waters of the Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge. Analysis of this information reveals much about basic habits and behavior of whitefish in this region that might be of use to fisheries scientists. It also highlights some of the characteristics which distinguish LTK as a data type and presents an opportunity to assess both the strengths and limitations of using LTK in the western scientific context.

Key Words: broad whitefish (*Coregonus nasus*), humpback whitefish (*Coregonus pidschian*), Koyukuk River, Kanuti River, least cisco (*Coregonus sardinella*), whitefish (*Coregonus sp.*), traditional ecological knowledge

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